



By TRISTRAM COFFIN

# Washington Watch

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POLITICS 1972, 1948 ALL OVER AGAIN - A Washington Post political survey is headed, "The Year The People Fooled the Politicians," and TRB writes in the New Republic: "We think it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that George McGovern... will defeat Richard Nixon next November, and we warn readers not to take the auguries of the poll-takers too seriously until the campaign develops a bit. What should not be forgotten is that, divided as the Democrats are, the great unifier is Richard Nixon."

A bit of arithmetic; if McGovern can stir the 46 million Americans who failed to vote for President in 1968 and excite the 26 million new voters, he can forget Governor Wallace, Mayor Daley, and the pressure blocs.

It may be 1948 all over again. I covered that Presidential campaign, on the trains of both Harry Truman and Tom Dewey. The polls and the journalistic seers had given up on Truman. The notables did not ride his train or come out to greet him at the whistle stops. They were busy trying to elect the state tickets against the national disaster they feared. The Democratic Party was split into 3 pieces. The Truman campaign was hectic and disorganized. The press snubbed him.

Dewey had a magnificent, smooth-working organization. He was rather regal, the cardinal blessing the peasants. It was easy to imagine him as President. He said the right things. The media gave him the benefit of every doubt.

But strange things were happening along the route. Whenever the Truman train passed, people stood waiting to see and hear him. He had to add new stops because of the throngs. He was their guy, a little fellow fighting the "interests" and the political machines and too damn spunky to give up. They cheered him wildly and shouted, "Give 'em hell, Harry."

Dewey's crowds were polite, attentive, but not enthusiastic. I circulated among the crowds in the Midwest, and discovered an uneasy doubt about Dewey. He was too slick; many feared he would sell them out.

On election night we went off the air thinking Dewey had won. The next morning the white haired hotel chamber maid wakened me by rattling on the door, and when I opened it she said simply and joyfully, "We won." Truman was opposed by insurgent Democrats on both sides. Strom Thurmond was to the right with his States Rights Party, and former Vice President Henry Wallace to the left with the Progressive Party. Thurmond carried five Southern states, and the Wallace defection cost Truman both New York and Michigan.

McGovern's Temptation - The Senator is tempted to make concessions to the old polls and power blocs to win their support. The danger is of alienating the very dynamic forces which brought McGovern the nomination, and are the most effective grass roots political organization in America.

The temptation is evident in the press. McGovern has to have suggested he would keep "residual forces" in Thailand

until POWs are freed. This has been a Pentagon favorite: the US should get out of the muck of Vietnam and set up a strong position in Thailand to hold our muscle and influence in South Asia. The oil people also want a major American presence in Thailand to protect the rich oil preserves in the Gulf of Siam.

But what the Senator may not know is: Thailand is itself embroiled in a civil war in the two northern provinces, and this could blow up into another Vietnam. Also, China is more sensitive to Thailand than to South Vietnam, and has built a supply route for the guerillas from China across N. Vietnam to Thailand.

Second, columnist John Roche claims McGovern-trying to win over prominent Zionists who used Senator Humphrey to voice their displeasure over the S. Dakotan's lack of a tough pro-Israel policy-favors mining the harbor at Alexandria. This to keep Soviet arms out of Egypt. But the best information from Tel Aviv is that Russia is anxious to end Egypt's free loading of guns and money. The real danger is the hot heads among young Egyptian officers will take over the Soviet guns and start shooting. If the Soviet wanted, really wanted, to get planes and tanks to Egypt, the loss of Alexandria would be a minor snag.

McGovern, to win, must be a striking contrast to President Nixon. He must show himself as stubbornly independent, listening to the murmurs of the people, deaf to the deals of the power blocs, brimming with integrity, full steam ahead with reform. He has to be exciting and adventurous, and stir a wild and wonderful hope across America that change is on the way. This is the only way the sit-at-homes and the voters will push him over the top.

A New Society? - A French observer, Jean-Francois Revel of L'Express, writes: "The 1972 Presidential elections are going to be a big showdown between old and new America.... America has no choice today between basic changes and complete disintegration.... So the only question is: Will the American political system manage to mint a new society or will they be blown up by the endless American crisis?.... The Presidential election will provide a unique opportunity to achieve the pacific but very deep change that America needs badly.

"In reality, a 'critical election'... is long overdue. After President Johnson's 'resignation', the logical move in 1968 was a move toward the left. The death of Robert Kennedy, the fact that Eugene McCarthy had not the time to enlarge his constituency outside the circle of war dissenters, gave the nomination to a Johnsonian, Vice President Humphrey, hence the victory to Mr. Nixon. But in a way, Mr. Nixon's success in 1968 was an accident. The fiasco of the Republican's law and order strategy during the midterm elections of 1970 proved clearly that America was still in search of creative solutions and not ready to go back to sleep."

McGovern has been gathering steam, probably since the slay-

ing of John Kennedy. If Nixon wins, Revel says, the young insurgents "feeling cheated and embittered and, judging the political system hopeless, would feed future forces for a violent period of civil strife."

Campaign Strategies Outlined- The McGovern forces will try to draw attention to issues where the Republicans are in trouble - the economy, war and civil liberties. The Nixon campaign will divert attention by hammering on subsidiary issues, as busing, attacking the Democrats as radical, and hailing what Revel calls "diplomatic tourism", the trips to Peking and Moscow. ("Frantic trips abroad have always been, for statesmen, a way of escape from domestic failures. We Frenchmen saw, in May 1968, DeGaulle, in the midst of a national collapse, fly surrealistically to Rumania, in order to get the applause he was badly lacking at home.")

The economy is an issue where McGovern can bring back the Wallace blue collar and Meany working stiff's vote. TRB reports: "There are almost twice as many people unemployed today as when Mr. Nixon took office." Senator William Proxmire, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, says the real jobless rate is 8%, rather than the 5.9% the Government claims (by jiggering the statistics to omit the idle who no longer seek jobs.).

TRB also notes, "Price and wage controls of Phase II haven't been a success." The Post says the wholesale price index rose "by a steep 0.5% in June," or for an annual rate of 6%. The financial page is not encouraging - "U.S. Dollar Hits Floor in Europe - Market Declines - Bankers Trust Raises Prime Rate - Profits Show Drop." The Post predicts the Administration's budget deficit for this year will be \$34 billion, an increase of \$11 billion in a year.

The distribution of income grows more lopsided. A Cambridge Institute Study shows (Christian Science Monitor), "The dollar gap between the richest and poorest, one-fifth of the US population, is growing yearly." Some 45% of all salary income goes to the top fifth; ditto 60% of income from personal business and property. The top 20% own 77% of total personal wealth. The average income of a family in the lowest fifth was \$3,085 in 1968; in the top fifth \$21,973. TRB notes, "The income of the richest 20% of all families is greater than that of all 60% at the bottom."

Government Policy Locks In Inequality - This is done by the tax structure, anti-trust settlements, subsidies, and other rulings.

The Cambridge study finds that persons making under two thousand dollars pay 27.2% of their income in taxes; those over \$50,000 a year but 6.7%. TRB says: "Taxes are so arranged that one oil company paid only 1.2% in Federal taxes on nearly \$1 billion in net income.... The breadwinner with a family of four who earns \$10,000 pays Federal income taxes in 1972 of \$905. A taxpayer with the same income from sale of stock or land pays only \$98 in taxes." Vice President Agnew has demonstrated the Administration stand against tax reform. He called McGovern's plan a system "where the rich pay but everybody enjoys a heaven on earth."

The President's economic policy is to cut domestic spending, hoist military funds, and pour Federal funds and benefits in at the top, or the "trickle-down theory" which fell apart in the Hoover Administration. A favorite spout is the arms-maker. The Administration provided

heed a \$250 million loan. Soon afterwards, Lockheed raised the pension of its top executives from \$45,000 to \$65,000 a year. Senator Proxmire remarked, "These are the same wonderful people who brought us the cost overruns and performance failures (of)...the C-5A cargo plane, the Cheyenne helicopter; and DE 1052 destroyer escort, and a variety of other fiascos."

Agriculture benefits are also poured in at the top. Five hundred large farmers in California's Imperial Valley received \$12 million in farm payments, or \$24,000 each. By contrast, 10,000 of the poor and landless got \$800 each in welfare payments. Less than one percent of the farmers in California own 40% of the farm land.

The Administration asked subsidies for Lockheed and Penn Central. A recent Federal Power Commission ruling allows the Tennessee Pipeline Co. to shift costs of an unsuccessful project from the stockholders to the customers. Jack Anderson says the Justice Department is "quietly preparing to settle another multi-million anti-trust case like the celebrated ITT case, which will benefit contributors to the Republican cause."

The President vetoed a bill for day care centers to help working mothers as "inflationary," yet is asking Congress for \$25 billion more for the Pentagon, or, precisely, for the arms makers. The Times reports a charge that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has "intentionally refused to provide children of Medicaid families the medical treatment that is due them under terms of a 5-year-old Federal law."

Military Spending Going Up - The Administration ignores the high military spending threat to inflation and the stability of the dollar. The Conference Board business newsletter says: "Defense is sharply on the rise." This is partially masked because of the long time leads. "Former Defense Secretary Clifford points out: 'In the last 10 years, from the fiscal year 1963 through 1972, the Federal Government has collected a total of \$681 billion in individual income taxes. In the same 10-year period, by startling coincidence, the Federal Government has paid out for defense expenditures the sum of \$680 billion.'"

Much of the military spending is unneeded folly. Clifford says, "The more we have spent on defense, the less secure we have become. This is because we have thought of security pre-eminently in terms of expenditures on armaments." The Center for Defense Information says Trident (or ULMS, the giant submarine the Administration seeks) "is not needed as a 'signal' to show the Soviet Union that we intend to 'remain strong.' We can already obliterate the Soviet Union many times over...ULMS is not likely to deter Russia from further nuclear buildup. It is more likely to encourage it."

When McGovern calls for modest military cuts, the Secretary of Defense accuses him of "running up the white flag."

The War As An Issue - The Administration hopes to defuse the war issue by: pouring on so many bombs Hanoi won't be able to mount new drives before the election, twisting the Kremlin's arm by the promise of credits and so get it to press Hanoi to back down, and using Dr. Henry Kissinger to give optimistic briefings.

China, though, is not standing still. A Washington Post dispatch from Peking says China is sending "laborers," or engineer battalions, into N. Vietnam, possibly as many as 50,000 to carry out communications and let Hanoi make one more ma-

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for push." The Toronto Globe & Mail correspondent in Peking says the Nixon-Kissinger hopes of using China to get out free from the war are "ill founded" and "wishful thinking." A Times report from Peking underlines, "Support of N. Vietnam is a cardinal principle of Chinese policy... and the U. S. should have no illusions on this score." Other reports say the Peking press is attacking President Nixon by name for his saturation bombings. Senate majority leader Mansfield, a recent visitor to China, warns the U. S. is taking a dangerous risk by bombing close to China's border. Another visitor, Claire H. Gold, writes in the Times, "After spending 30 days in China recently, I share Senator Mansfield's opinion that China will fight."

Even Russia, which Kissinger suggests is in the President's vest pocket, is increasingly irritated by US tactics. At a lunch for Castro in Moscow, Brezhnev said the Soviet had taken "a firm stand" on the war: "Our assistance and full support to the Vietnamese people will continue until the victory of the just cause of the Vietnamese people." Commentaries in the Russian press and radio call U. S. tactics "genocide", demand a coalition government in Saigon, attack Thailand's part in the war, and accuse the US of violating the Moscow agreements by pushing for new arms systems.

The Emotional Issue - Even if the war were to end tomorrow, an emotional issue remains. This is the sense of guilt over terror bombings - anti-personnel weapons, hitting the dikes, striking civilian targets - and lying about it. (A Western reporter, Jean Thorval of Agence France, reports visiting areas where dikes and dams were hit; and a Swedish photographer, Erik Erikson, has photographs.

The feeling of many Americans is reflected by the Reverend William Sloane Coffin Jr., in the Yale Alumni Magazine: "Since 1963 we have so escalated and prolonged the war that virtually the entire surface of Indochina is now soaked with the blood of innocent men, women and children... Picture what America would be like if in the last 8 years... all of Virginia would now be bulldozed. All of New Jersey, Connecticut and Rhode Island would be cratered with bombs, and the tier states from N. Dakota to Oklahoma would have been sprayed with defoliants. Three and a half million Americans would be dead and another 8 million wounded. A friendly foreign power, through bombing and artillery, would have accidentally killed 1.75 million civilians and wounded another 4 million. More than 800 thousand of us would have suffered amputations or would be crippled paraplegics, and 69 million would be homeless."

The Los Angeles Times reports from the Quang Ngai, South Vietnam hospital: "Of 351 war-injured civilians willing to say how they were wounded, 243 or 69% said it was from American or S. Vietnamese weapons, while 108 or 31% said it was from Viet Cong action."

Le Monde says the bombing of the dikes would kill more people than exploding several nuclear bombs, and a Hanoi spokesman talks of "millions of deaths." This would be the greatest atrocity in world history, surmounting even the wildest of the Nazi barbarities.

Is The Bombing Of The Innocent Deliberate? - Yes, asserts an Air Force engineer and Vietnam veteran. Al Hubbard told Alternative Features Service that civilian targets are deliberately selected to kill civilians and the pilots know it. "First of all there are no innocent civilians in Vietnam."

flights.... The pilots in the cockpits actually see the targets and can clearly identify them. They fly low level bomb runs and the hospital is clearly marked." The first "element" drops 2,000 pound high explosive bombs which burst "with a deafening roar." This creates panic and people run. The second element arrives as people are running around in the open and drops anti-personnel bombs. On a raid described by Hubbard the Guava bombs were dropped. Each guava bomblet has 250 steel ball-bearing pellets; each bomb contains 100 guava bombs.

A foreign correspondent, Peter Jenkins of the Guardian, writes: "The lugubrious self-righteousness of the President becomes obscenely callous as the high explosives and napalm continue to rain upon the just and unjust... There can be no 'peace with honor' after what has been done."

The aim seems cynical - to keep Thieu & Co. from falling until after the American elections. A Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report suggests that without heavy US air and naval support ARVN would collapse and President Thieu be run out of office. A leading S. Vietnamese, Ngo Cong Duc, Catholic, newspaper editor, ex-Assembly member, said in Paris: "The Americans say they want to stop a bloodbath, but we get a bloodbath from them every day. It is very hard for me or any Vietnamese to explain the way we feel about the American method of fighting this war - the bombs, the defoliants, the napalm. It is barbarism."

Other Effects Of War - Both Saigon and Washington lie regularly. The other day Mr. Nixon said that after the French cease fire in Indochina 15,000 French POWs were not accounted for. A French Government spokesman says: "The last French prisoners were returned less than three months after the conclusion of the Geneva agreements." Also, the Administration in announcing withdrawals from Vietnam failed to tell of the increased air and naval units sent in. The Times says that total "American military strength has remained about constant... since last March.... At the end of this month (July) the total will be 141,000 - 50,000 in Thailand, 42,000 in the 7th fleet, and 49,000 in Vietnam." This "residual force... is likely to remain here for the indefinite future."

The military has lunged out of control. Air Force General Lavelle admitted ordering at least 28 unauthorized strikes of N. Vietnam. An Air Force sergeant says he was ordered to falsify reports that US planes were receiving hostile fire, as an excuse to bomb N. Vietnam. A Navy officer aboard a carrier says recon flights were sent over N. Vietnam deliberately to draw fire.

The Veterans Administration suggests 10% of the 5 million who served in Vietnam come home hooked on heroin. The main source of the heroin is a well organized traffic by high officials of our allies in Laos, S. Vietnam and Thailand. The House Foreign Affairs Committee moved to cut aid to Thailand because it was "a major source of the world's heroin." A member of the House Armed Services Committee says, "US pilots flying CIA-operated helicopters" have been used to smuggle heroin.

A newsletter, "The Medical Letter," asserts GIs are bringing home dangerous diseases, including a virulent strain of malaria, drug-resistant TB, dengue fever, encephalitis, cholera, typhus, bubonic plague, viral hepatitis, and parasitic

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION - The investigation of the bungled bugging of the Democratic National Committee will throw light into the dark corners of the John Kennedy assassination. Independent investigators are convinced that rabid Cuban exiles were involved. They were angered that the Bay of Pigs Invasion was not rescued by U.S. warplanes.

\* Revolution is ready to break out in another SEATO country, the Philippines. The corrupt Marcos regime is fighting the New People's Army guerillas in 18 of 67 provinces. Since 1965 prices have risen 250%. The Manila Times reports that 36 families got \$2.7 billion in loans from government lending institutions. One of 5 members of the Manila police has charges of misconduct pending. Two thousand Filipino youths threw fire and shrapnel bombs at the US Embassy on July 4. A former army officer, graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, leads the guerilla forces, and revolutionary committees have been setup in 800 villages. The Christian Science Monitor says, "Put democracy in the Philippines on the uncertain list."

\* The Committee for Economic Development says "crime is mounting, it costs \$16 billion a year, and is worse in the US than other nations... The Committee for Economic Development makes comparisons between 1960 and 1970 and these increases are hideous: criminal homicide has gone up 75%; forcible rape 120%, aggravated assault over 115% and robbery about 225%.... Ramsey Clark linked rising crime with deteriorating social conditions, a position minimized by Mr. Nixon." (Monitor) Last month, the President hailed "truly significant progress in this Administration's determination to roll back the wave of crime which swept our nation in the 1960s."

\* Last November, Food and Drug Commissioner Edwards said if controls did not keep DES out of meat "there is just one recourse for us and that is to ban its use totally." DES is the growth stimulant which has caused cancer in laboratory animals. And the amount in meat is four and a half times higher this year than last. The director of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Frank J. Rauscher Jr., says the "prudent" course would be to ban it. Instead Edwards announced DES could be used pending hearings which could go on for some time. The manufacturer of DES is the Eli Lilly chemical company, whose officers have long been a mainstay for the GOP in Indiana. Lilly has sold \$58 million worth of DES since 1956.

\* The ouster of Russian leaders from Egypt opens a new threat to Israel. This is dissident Egyptian officers will stage a coup d'etat and declare war on Israel. So Egyptian relations have been near the blowup stage for a year. Russian officers were openly contemptuous of the Egyptian fighting forces and advised Moscow that they would not win against Israel.

There were several incidents between Russian and Egyptian officers. Moscow then decided (1) to gradually phase out the Egyptian arms program and (2) keep young Egyptian officers away from the big guns.

Sadat is trying to persuade the Russians to reverse their decision and the young officers are putting pressure on him. He was warned he would be thrown from power unless he told the Russians to leave. If the young officers do turn the guns on Israel, the war would last less than a week. Israeli planes would bomb the guns to silence.

-Tristram Coffin, July 19, 1972.

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